

BLM NEWS RELEASE

Bureau of Land Management
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**BLM Seeks Public Comment on Proposed Treatments of Vegetation
on BLM Public Lands in Western U.S.**

The Bureau of Land Management today released its extensive environmental analysis of proposed vegetation treatments that will combat the spread of noxious and invasive plants and reduce the amount of highly flammable forest and rangeland fuels, such as stands of pinyon and juniper trees or dead and down woody materials, on BLM-managed public lands. The BLM invites public comment through January 9, 2006, on the proposed methods for treating and managing vegetation.

"Our management of the public lands today will determine their health tomorrow," said BLM Director Kathleen Clarke. "This analysis will help us make the right management decisions for the health and safety of people and wildlife, the future health of the land, and the economic stability of our communities."

"I invite concerned citizens to share their comments on these proposals to reduce hazardous fuels and wildfire risks," added Director Clarke. "I also invite everyone to partner with us in combating noxious and invasive weeds that threaten the economic productivity of millions of acres of public land across the West."

The BLM documents are national in scope and contain supporting analysis and evaluation data. The *Draft Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)* will address the BLM's use of herbicides, and the *Draft Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report (PER)* describes the environmental impacts of using non-herbicide treatment methods, including fire and mechanical, manual, or biological controls. The documents and associated material are available at www.blm.gov.

Hazardous woodland and rangeland fuels contribute to more frequent and often more devastating wildfires that threaten lives, homes, and wildlife habitat in the West. The President's National Fire Plan targeted these hazardous fuels for treatment and removal.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land—261 million surface acres—than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the reports the BLM has drafted?

The BLM has developed two reports: the Draft *Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)* and the Draft *Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report (PER)*. Supporting documentation is included with the reports.

What is the purpose of these two reports?

They consolidate, update and evaluate vegetation treatments and methods of treatment. The PEIS and PER will replace analyses contained in four existing vegetation treatment EISs the BLM completed between 1986 and 1992. They also analyze vegetation treatments on BLM-administered lands in Alaska that were not included in the earlier EISs. Together, these reports will:

- consider reasonably foreseeable activities, particularly hazardous fuels reduction treatments, emergency stabilization and rehabilitation efforts, and noxious weed and invasive terrestrial plant species management.
- address human health and ecological risk for proposed use of chemical herbicides on public lands.
- provide a cumulative impact analysis of the use of chemical herbicides in conjunction with other treatment methods.

What does the national, draft PEIS do?

The PEIS is not a land use plan and is not an amendment to land use plans. (Land use plans are documents comprised of management decisions for use of public lands.) It provides baseline cumulative impact assessments that local BLM offices can use as they work with local, state and national stakeholders to develop local plans throughout the western states and Alaska. It also provides a comprehensive analysis of the BLM's use of chemical herbicides in its various vegetation treatment programs related to hazardous fuels reduction, noxious weed and invasive terrestrial plant species management, and resource rehabilitation following catastrophic fires and other disturbances.

What does the national, draft PER do?

The PER provides an assessment of the expected impacts of the use of herbicides, in addition to other vegetation treatment methods (fire, mechanical, manual, and biological), on up to 6 million acres of public land a year.

What are hazardous fuels?

Highly flammable forest and rangeland fuels, such as dead and down woody materials; juniper and pinyon trees; sagebrush, mesquite, and other types of brush; cheatgrass and other plants that become tinder-dry. These accumulate and become fuel for wildfires, and in many cases contribute to the frequency and magnitude of wildfires.

Which areas will the BLM consider for these different methods of vegetation treatment?

The analysis area includes only surface estate public lands administered by 10 BLM state offices in: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana (North Dakota/South Dakota), New Mexico (Oklahoma/Texas/Nebraska), Nevada, Oregon (Washington), Utah and Wyoming.

Has the BLM coordinated with other agencies and local groups on these reports?

The BLM's interdisciplinary project team coordinated closely with Tribal, local and state governments, in addition to working with the Western Governors Association, the National Association of Counties, and other groups.

How can I obtain the draft reports?

Copies of the two reports and associated documents may be downloaded from the BLM Web site at <http://www.blm.gov>. Compact disks (CDs) of the documents are available on request, and a printed copy is available for public review in each BLM office.

When and how can I comment?

The public comment period opens today and will end January 9, 2006. To provide written comments, be placed on the mailing list, or request CDs of the documents, contact Brian Amme, Project Manager, BLM, P.O. Box 12000, Reno, NV 89520-0006. Comments may also be faxed to 775-861-6712, or emailed to vegeis@nv.blm.gov. You may also comment at 10 public meetings in: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Grand Junction, Colorado; Salt Lake City, Utah; Billings, Montana; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Boise, Idaho; Sacramento, California; Portland, Oregon; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Washington D.C. (Meeting schedule follows.) Time for public comment at the meetings may be limited. If you prepare a letter or lengthy comments for submission, please give a brief verbal synopsis of your comments during the comment period and provide a copy of your entire comments to the court reporter.

What if I don't want my name released with my comments?

If you wish to withhold your name and/or address from public review or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written or faxed comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. The BLM will not, however, consider anonymous comments. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

When can I see the comments that have been submitted?

After the close of the public comment period, comments will be available for public inspection at the BLM Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Blvd., Reno, NV 89520. A summary of substantive comments, and the BLM response to these comments, will be in the Final EIS.

Schedule of BLM Public Meetings for Draft PEIS/PER

Date & Time	Locations	BLM Contact
November 28, 2005 6 p.m. Open House 7 p.m. Public Meeting	BLM Office 333 SW 1st Avenue 3rd Floor Conference Room Portland, Oregon 97204	Michael Campbell (503) 808-6031
November 29, 2005 6 p.m. Open House 7 p.m. Public Meeting	Clarion Hotel 2600 Auburn Blvd. Sacramento, California	Dianna Brink (916) 978-4645
November 30, 2005 6 p.m. Open House 7 p.m. Public Meeting	Little America Hotel 500 South Main Street Salt Lake City, Utah 84101	Laura J. Williams (801) 539-4027
December 1, 2005 6 p.m. Open House 7 p.m. Public Meeting	Marriott Pyramid North 5151 San Francisco Rd. NE Albuquerque, New Mexico	Bernie Chavez (505) 438-7668
December 5, 2005 6 p.m. Open House 7 p.m. Public Meeting	Grand Vista Hotel 2790 Crossroads Blvd. Grand Junction, Colorado	Melodie Lloyd (970) 244-3097
December 6, 2005 6 p.m. Open House 7 p.m. Public Meeting	Holiday Inn - Airport Hotel 3300 S. Vista Boise, Idaho	Sharon Paris (208) 373-4028
December 7, 2005 6 p.m. Open House 7 p.m. Public Meeting	BLM Office 5001 Southgate Drive Billings, Montana	Theresa Hanley (406) 896-5068
December 8, 2005 6 p.m. Open House 7 p.m. Public Meeting	Holiday Inn - Yellowstone Room 204 West Fox Farm Road Cheyenne, Wyoming	Ken Henke (307) 775-6041
December 13, 2005 6 p.m. Open House 7 p.m. Public Meeting	BLM Office 4701 N Torrey Pines Dr. Las Vegas, Nevada	Kirsten Cannon (702) 515-5057
December 13, 2005 1 p.m. Open House 2 p.m. Public Meeting	Courtyard by Marriott – Embassy Row 1600 Rhode Island Avenue, NW Washington D.C.	Sharon Wilson (202) 452-5130